

THE ITALIAN OPERA.

Meyerbeer's "Star of the North" Last Night.

Giacomo Meyerbeer's dramatic musical works have always been received with great favor here. His Semiramide has held the lyric stage as a matchless production since 1819, and will probably live through all time as his ablest composition. More popular now, because more modern, are his Robert le Diable and Les Huguenots. It is a little remarkable, however, that his most brilliant and most elaborate work, L'Etroite du Nord, has never been produced here. It is true that we have had his Le Parion de Piomet and his L'Aspirante, which were both composed more recently than the Star of the North, and about like it, in elegant classical music and stirring situations, but no Impresario has ever attempted La Stella del Nord here, nor indeed in this country, upon a scale of magnificence that would render its presentation a success.

Meyerbeer composed Pierre le Grand when he was sixty years old, but in the full possession of all his wonderful faculties. It was the emanation of his ripest experience, his most matured taste, and his most noted period of ease, affluence, and success. He labored upon it for years, and there is every reason to believe that he considered it his masterpiece. Above all his other works, it shows the brilliancy and versatility of the author, as well as his sublime appreciation of the grand, the beautiful, and the true in Goethe's greatest creations. He spent more time upon the Star of the North than upon his last great work, L'Aspirante, yet the latter has created a furor wherever produced, while the former has rarely succeeded in eliciting much enthusiasm.

The score of L'Etroite du Nord, like all of Meyerbeer's operas, is a perfect wonder of elaboration. There is no possible expression of the sense or feeling in the subject but what is fully and forcibly pictured in the music, sometimes in so detailed a manner as to be considered burdensome, were it not for the artificial relief in enchanting melody that is constantly introduced.

In the little incident snatched from the life of Peter the Great and his lovely Empress, which furnishes the plot of this opera, Meyerbeer found ample scope to compose a score which would exhibit all the emotions of the human soul, as well as that unsophisticated nature which was entirely prevalent in Russia at the period described. For grandeur, subject-matter is found in the various scenes—first, in the magnificent situations, then of a martial sort in the Silesian camp, afterwards of a regal kind in the palace at St. Petersburg.

The opera of L'Etroite du Nord was written in 1854, for the Opera Comique of Paris, where it continues to be a favorite. Afterwards it was Italianized for the opera in London. Much of the music of Meyerbeer's Camp of Silesia is introduced, including a gipsy song and a duet with the flute.

Its first production here last evening created an impression that will not soon be forgotten. By special request it will be repeated on Wednesday evening; we, therefore, here introduce the argument or plot of the opera—

"At the commencement of the first act, the curtain rises on a village near Wyborg, on Gulf of Finland. Danilowitz, a Russian pastry-cook, is selling bread to a group of ship carpenters, among whom is Peter Micaceli, disguised. They challenge him to drink to the health of Charles XII of Sweden. He refuses, and is supported by Peter. Enraged at this, the workmen are about to assault them, when the deck-yard bell sounds, and they are compelled to go to their labors. Peter remains, and engages Danilowitz to follow him into Russia. After Danilowitz has left the scene, a flute is heard playing a waltz, and 'George,' the brother of Catharine, a cavalier, appears at the door of the cottage. Catharine has gone to ask 'Prasovia,' the daughter of the village innkeeper, to be given in marriage to her brother. As they drink to her success, she comes on the stage, after telling them that she had succeeded, she accuses Peter and her brother of their love for drink, and tells the former of a prophecy made by her mother upon her death-bed, respecting her future husband. On meeting him, she recognized something so proud and grand in the expression of his face, that she thought him to be above her own class in life. He demands what she thinks now. Catharine is offended at his tone of command, when 'Prasovia' rushes in. A party of Cossacks are plundering the village, but Catharine volunteers to save them, and Peter determines upon watching her. She then quits the stage, and as the Cossacks are about to pillage 'George's' house, she reappears in a gipsy dress. Naming her mother—a Cossack fortune teller—they remember her. After predicting their fortunes, they retire, and 'George,' with 'Prasovia,' leave the stage to make arrangements for their wedding. Peter and Catharine then betroth themselves; and the act terminates with her brother's marriage to 'Prasovia' and his being named in a inscription imposed upon the village. Catharine' undertaking to find him a substitute, for fifteen days, to a Colonel Yermoloff, he recovers his memory, and 'Gritzenzo' brings the young soldier back to him, unless he wishes for a closer acquaintance with the knight than would be perfectly agreeable. By this order Catharine is saved; but on her return to Peter's tent, she is seized by 'Gritzenzo' by jumping into the river and swimming across it. Before doing so, she has thrust a paper for Peter into the corporal's hand. It reveals the plot that is on foot to cause the troops to join the Swedes. Yermoloff and his soldiers appear when Peter declares himself the Czar, and they return to their obedience as the Tartar grenadiers arrive.

"The third act opens with a room in the Czar's palace. Danilowitz, as a special mark of favor by his master, has been admitted into it. It is a model of Peter's workshop in Finland. 'Gritzenzo' enters to tell that the Czar that some Finnish carpenters invited by Peter himself, as they say, have arrived, and is bidden to allow them to pass into Russia. He then supplicates for promotion, in consequence of the ship he saved upon him by Catharine. At once recollecting him, Peter orders him to produce the young soldier on the morrow, otherwise he will be shot. Amongst the other emigrants from Finland, 'George' and 'Prasovia' have arrived, and 'George' shows the papers of his conception to 'Gritzenzo,' who immediately arrests him as a substitute for Catharine, and hands him over to 'Danilowitz.' As he is led off the stage, Peter rushes on. Passing the apartment of the latter, he has heard the voice of Catharine. 'Danilowitz' has discovered her, but she has lost her reason. Peter determines to endeavor to recall her to herself. The large doors at the back of the stage are thrown open. The house of Catharine is seen, workmen are there and advance towards her, as she appears upon the stage. The favorite of Peter enters dressed as a pastry-cook once more, then 'George' and 'Prasovia' with a wedding procession appear. Peter's flute is heard and he recognizes it at once. Her restoration to reason has been completed, and the curtain falls."

Notwithstanding the deluging rain of last evening, the audience present at the Academy to witness the performance of the Star of the North was very large, brilliant, and distinguished, and the rendition of the glorious work, on the whole, amply repaid those who "battled with the clemency" to witness it. As a spectacular opera merely, it was worth witnessing last evening, for it was put upon the stage in the best style, and utterly regardless of expense. The great camp scene in the second act was superbly picturesque, and at times, when the stage was occupied by the principal singers, the chorus, the soldiers, etc., the ensemble presented was at once grand and imposing.

The tableau at the end of the first act, where the curtain falls, when the embarkation of the "voyageurs" and "Katharine" (Miss Kellogg) sings a "farewell" to those in the departing boat, is also highly effective. In fact, the whole opera seems to have received the utmost and most minute attention from the management; and, as a consequence, was presented to the public last night in a way that would have done honor to the best of the opera houses in Europe. The dresses were all new and handsome, and the various changes of costume necessary to be made by the performers, principal and secondary, chorus, and all, were rigidly adhered to. The performance itself was very fine—Miss Kellogg, Miss Hauck, Bellini, and Antonucci, in the principal roles, doing their utmost for the success of the occasion. Miss Kellogg's rendering of the magnificent aria at the close of the first act—"Teella del ciel su!" was delightful. Her rich sympathetic voice and splendid execution have never been heard to better advantage, and the ovation she received at the fall of the curtain, immediately after her singing of it, was abundantly deserved. Throughout the whole of the opera, vocally and dramatically she was indeed most acceptable and artistic. We question if her arduous role could have been invested with more of the sterling spirit of the true artist, for she entered into the impersonation *con amore*, and achieved one of the most gratifying successes of the evening. Her "Andiam, amici!" in the first act was loudly applauded, as was also her duet with Signor Antonucci, "Al suor delle trombe." Antonucci's superb voice was very effective in this piece, and the two fine artists created great enthusiasm for their excellent acting and singing in it. Antonucci, as "Peter," was all that could have been desired. He looked, sang, and acted the character to the very life, and whether viewed as the simple "Peter" or the subsequent Czar, he was equally satisfactory. Bellini had a role in "Gritzenzo" exactly suited to him, and his impersonation of it left nothing to wish for. His aria in the first act, "Al fusco alla polve," was splendidly given, and the scene in which it occurs was acted out by the artist to perfection. His acting in the third act, where, as the "corporal," he has to drill his recruits, was also most admirable, and the characteristic role he sings in doing so was loudly encored.

Miss Hauck, as "Prasovia," looked charmingly picturesque, and fully met the brilliant requirements of her part. The splendid duet which occurs in the first act, "Oh qual delirio," was capably sung by her, and Miss Kellogg, and received a well-merited encore. Indeed, all that Miss Hauck attempted during the evening bore the impress of the careful and capable artist, and her efforts added materially to the reputation which her "Amina" in *Sonnambula* created for her.

The tenor di grazia Signor Baragli was, at times, hardly equal to the emergencies of the part of "Danilowitz," but, as a whole, it was acceptably rendered. His distinct enunciation, artistic style, and fervent manner atoned in a great measure for the lightness of his voice, and gave an importance to his role which it otherwise would not have been entitled to. His opening aria, "Chi ne Voin," requires artistic treatment to give it effect, and this Baragli gave to it in an eminent degree. The minor characters of the opera were all very respectably filled, taking the fact into consideration of this being the first performance of the work.

The Star of the North is abundantly endowed with most effective and striking choruses. Many of them indeed are perfect masterpieces in this line of combination, and have evidently received the most careful attention at the hands of Meyerbeer. The soldiers' chorus in the last act "Dobrobroto assai cooper ti Sian" is one of these, and is one of the most stirring and warlike efforts we have ever heard. The opening chorus "Alla Finlanda" is also very fine and effective, and is full of the genius and fire of its immortal composer. These and the various other choruses in the opera were splendidly sung last evening, and were much applauded by the audience.

The orchestration of the opera is another feature of it in Meyerbeer's very best and most exhaustive style. It is really grand and massive, fully worthy of Meyerbeer and the glorious superstructure he has built upon it. The overture is brilliant, pointed, and richly endowed, and was performed by the splendid orchestra last evening in the most acceptable and enjoyable manner. The overture to the second was equally well performed, and, in short, the instru-

mentation throughout—very difficult as much of it is—was exceedingly well rendered. For the first performance of so fine a work, *The Star of the North* was a great success, and the announcement of its repetition to-morrow evening should be hailed with delight by all true lovers of the great and the beautiful in art. This evening Verdi's grand opera of *Ernani* will be the attraction, with Poch, Mazzoleni, Bellini, and Antonucci in the principal roles—a splendid cast, the best perhaps the opera has ever had in this city.

P. S.—Owing to the severe hoarseness of Sig. Bellini, which absolutely requires a day's rest for him, the management is obliged to substitute for *Ernani* Donizetti's beautiful opera of *Lucrezia Borgia*, which will be produced with a powerful cast, including Poch, Natali-Testa, Mazzoleni, and Antonucci, with Fossati, Testa, Dubreuil, etc., in the minor parts. To-morrow, second and last time of *The Star of the North*.

THE BATEMAN CONCERTS.

A Critical Analysis and a General Disquisition. The first of the series of Bateman concerts was given last evening at Musical Fund Hall to a highly intelligent and large audience, considering the unpropitious state of the weather, which prevented many holders of tickets from being present.

The entertainment was as superior as it was rare in this good City of Brotherly Love, and we may safely say that a more excellent combination of artistic talent was seldom, if indeed ever, presented to a Philadelphia audience. It was not with this troupe as is too often the case with others—one particular star shining radiantly and triumphantly over insignificant musical associates who contribute nothing of the slightest import to the entertainment. Here every performer, without exception, was a most thorough artist, capable in a superlative degree of verifying the reputation with which they came heralded to us.

The programme of last evening was indeed most choice and well adapted, an additional proof of the sound judgment and discretion of the singers themselves, which is too often lost sight of by many professionals, apart from actual ability and superiority in any special line of general vocalization. Thus, for instance, we frequently find singers of fame, when keeping within a legitimate range of action, endangering their reputation and greatly injuring their clearness and sweetness of tone, by essaying passages outside their natural compass, and which can only be reached by some artificial effort, readily detected by a critical ear, and rarely, if ever, deserving of truthful commendation.

The greatest anxiety prevailed last night to hear Madame Parepa, prima donna, and alleged successor, by merit, of the Swedish Nightingale. So much talk has been had, and public curiosity excited to such an extent during the last week concerning this lady, let us first inquire—Who is Madame Parepa? Madame Euphrosine Parepa was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, and is the daughter of Count Demetrius Parepa, a Wallachian nobleman of high rank, who left his country for political reasons. Her mother was Elizabeth, or "Lisbeth," Seguin, sister of the celebrated and popular basso, Mr. Edward Seguin. The mother had a beautiful voice, was a fine artist, and her devotion to her profession probably influenced the destiny of her daughter, Euphrosine Parepa.

Her musical education was acquired during her long residence in Spain and Italy, whether her mother's musical engagements led, her *debut* was made on the island of Malta, at the Opera House, in 1856, where her success was very brilliant. From thence she took the tour of the provincial operatic cities, Naples, Milan, Florence, etc., and afterwards, with very great success, visiting Lisbon, Madrid, Rome, Berlin, Frankfurt, and Hamburg, from thence to London, which has been her home for the last few years, and, finally, her present trip to the United States.

Mme Parepa is a lady of large though graceful proportions, is very pretty, and carries herself with great ease upon the stage. Her voice is a full, natural, and clear-toned soprano of the very highest order of merit, and well deserving of the encomiums she has already received. Her appearance was the signal for unmitigated heartfelt and long-continued applause, which she most gracefully and properly acknowledged.

Science being restored, she introduced the cavatina "Ernani Involami," from the beautiful opera of *Ernani*, by Verdi, in which her voice rose rich and sonorous, pure and steady, throwing into the music a spirit and power which gave it a marked vitality. She, in this first piece, proved herself an accomplished artist in the true sense of the word, and she certainly is deserving the warmest critical applause. Of all Verdi's works we prefer *Ernani*, for the freshness and the earnestness of its melodies, the skilful treatment of its concerted pieces, and the massive grandeur of its finales, with their thoughtful and varied accompaniment. The nature and meaning of the composer is most gloriously illustrated, when his *romances* are entrusted to such a singer as Madame Parepa. In the second part she gave the "Nightingale's Trill" (a song appropriately named) with perfection itself; and the applause which greeted her at the termination showed how greatly and truly her voice, cultivation, and musical intelligence were appreciated. As an *encore* to this piece she sang the Scotch ballad "Coming through the Rye," which she gave with all the versatility, and decided application of emphasis, and modest gestulation of the "gentle lassie who lo'ded sea weel."

Next in order, we will take Mr. S. B. Mills, who has the reputation of being not only the most finished pianist in America, but the peer of the best players of classical music abroad. He performed a fantasia arranged by Liszt from *La Campanella*, by Meyerbeer, and a solo entitled "Caprice Galop," composed by himself. The physical power of this performer is truly great, his digital possession unusual facilities of execution; and, in the performance of octaves, repetitions of the same note, extending and sweeping arpeggios, florid legatos, and staccato passages—in short, many of the known difficulties which have successively arisen from such composers as Meyerbeer—in every variety of

style, he masters with the greatest ease and contentment. He and Wehli are the two greatest pianists who have visited Philadelphia for very many years.

Mr. Carl Rosa performed the "Souvenir de Haydn," "Auld Robin Gray," and a "Caprice Fantastique," as solos upon the violin, and proved himself to be master of that instrument, excelling all others we have had here for a sweetness and purity of tone and brilliancy of execution. The last-named piece was like the chirping and warbling of birds in some of the rapid passages, as was also portions of the "Carnival of Venice," given as an *encore*, which was brought to a rather abrupt termination, however, by the sudden snapping of his G string, an unavoidable accident, which both the audience and performer received good naturedly. His playing much resembles that of F. John Prouse, who performed in the State concert in this city on the 6th inst., excepting that the last named gives his *forte* passages with much more strength and vigor than Rosa. The last named is quite a young man, and must have studied and practised with much diligence and careful attention.

Signor Brignoli most enthusiastically applauded by the entire audience upon making his appearance on the platform, showing that his former acquaintance gave him not only a high opinion of him, or been carried rapturously away by more pretending but less competent tenors. He last night commenced with the romanza "M'Appari," from *Il Trovatore*, in which he had great opportunity for displaying the superior portion of his voice, and he used these opportunities to the best advantage.

He is as unctuously rich in his voice as ever, and has a smooth, sweet quality, capable of the most emphatic emotion. The voice is in the highest state of cultivation; his style is pure, free from exaggeration, full of grace and sentiment, but at the same time animated and energetic. He is at all times the greatest possible acquisition to any troupe he may be connected with.

His second selection was "In terra di deviciero," by Gaetano Mercadante, and on the *encore*, he sang the audience temporarily and somewhat emphatically appeared to insist upon his good-naturedly gave the ballad in English:—"Good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye!"

The duetto which he sang with Madame Parepa, was a quiet but in contrast by Donizetti, was a sparkling gem of graceful vocal discipline, and elicited much applause. It is an *andantino* movement in two-four time, changing, however, into the common (allegretto moderato) of the last stanza, "Just dover color nel core"—not difficult of execution, but requiring much nicety of expression. The concluding accented strain, dwelling on an accidental B flat and G natural, was decidedly and correctly emphasized, and the cadence at the end truly beautiful.

It is no wonder that Donizetti was one of the most admired of Italian composers, as his best works (such as *Linda*) sparkle with piquant and gracefully finished melodies, with musical ideas worked up into concentration with the greatest possible effect. He is essentially dramatic in the plot and construction of his operas, and understood well the art of stimulating the enthusiasm of the general audience.

Signor Ferranti is a basso buffo in voice, look, action, and gestulation. He is peculiarly humorous, and rendered his two pieces in capital style. The first was the cavatina "Largo al factotum della città," ("Room for the city's factotum"), an allegro movement in Rossini's *Barbiere de Seville*, and imitating the antics of an eccentric "Monsieur de Toulson," eager for business, and proclaiming his own merits. The piece was most capably sung, and attracted great attention. His second selection was a tarantella by the same composer, and entitled "Gia la Luna."

A Tarantella is a swift, delicious sort of Italian dance, in whirling six-eight measure. The form has been adopted by many composers of the modern school, as Thalberg, Luzzi, Chopin, and Rosini. In Italy some of the superstitious believe that the performance of this dance, or song, has the virtue of curing the bite of a venomous serpent, called Tarantula, from which fact the title has been given this style of music. Signor Ferranti distinguished himself in its rendition.

Signor Fortuna, in "Il Balen," was excellent as a basso cantabile in piano language a baritone—and, with Mme Parepa and Signor Brignoli, in the *terzetto*, "Zitti, Zitti," they made a splendid finale. This is not, properly speaking, a trio, as mentioned on the programme, but the first movement of "Ab illegro" in the *Barbiere de Seville*, is a dramatic representation of a passing storm.

The accompaniments of Mr. J. L. Horton were excellent, and thus it will be observed, as we have above stated, that every member of the company is almost unapproachable as to superiority. To night a splendid programme will be presented, and let our music-loving friends, professional and amateur, show their appreciation of it.

STATE OF THE NATION.

Important Revelations if True—Starting Stories—How the President is to be Impeached, How Deposed, and Who is to succeed Him—Mr. Stanton's Resignation to Follow the Completion of His Report—How the Regular Army Vacancies were Filled without President Johnson's Knowledge—The Government not to Interfere in the Baltimore Troubles.

and less scruples than any other available man. If President Johnson offered serious resistance, and Foster did not act vigorously, Yates was to be put in to control affairs.

When he was about leaving St. Louis, the informant in the case was requested by Governor Fletcher to ask Governor Morton, of Indiana, what number of arms he could spare to Missouri. Governor Morton replied, when the message was delivered, that he could not say that he had any to spare; that there were about one hundred thousand stand, with plenty of ammunition, in the arsenal; he would see what could be spared, and confer with Governor Fletcher.

Out of this correspondence grew the conference of the Governors at Philadelphia, which it is now well known was for the purpose, among others, of distributing arms throughout the country. Outcome of the statement of this officer there is indubitable evidence in the hands of President Johnson of the secret distribution of large quantities of arms throughout the Northwest on various pretexts, all of which, however, are legal and plainly authorized.

While the startling character of this story causes it to be incredulously received by many, the character of the officer making the statement, the known desperate characters of the leaders implicated in the scheme, and much corroborative evidence received cause it to be generally believed among the President's adherents.

The actual facts regarding the rumored resignation of Secretary Stanton are about as follows:—He is now engaged in making out his report, and as soon as it is finished he will undoubtedly retire. His resignation has been precipitated by the discovery lately made that Mr. Stanton had not only all the vacancies in the regular army without the knowledge or assent of Mr. Johnson.

He has been for some time making out the commissions and forwarding them to the appointing officers, with orders to them to report to General Grant for duty. General Grant supposing them, as appeared from the face of their papers, duly appointed by the President, has assigned them to duty in the regular army. On learning this fact, the President, very angry, sent for Mr. Stanton, and demanded an explanation. The result was the retirement of Mr. Stanton as soon as he could make out his report, on which he is now engaged.

The belief gains ground that General Sherman is to succeed Mr. Stanton *pro tem*. He cannot of course hold the office and that of Lieutenant-General at the same time, but at the request of General Grant, who desires the hearty co-operation of the war office in the work of reorganizing the army, Sherman will act as Secretary of War. The National Government will interfere neither one way nor the other in the Baltimore matter. The Executive naturally has an anxious concern about popular turbulence in any part of the country, but it is not likely that he believes it to be essential for him to interfere in all questions that arise between the State and municipal authorities.

The necessary spirit who are invoking the populace of Baltimore to violence will be properly attended to by the State authorities of Maryland. In case they prove insufficient, then, of course, the National Government may interfere and restore order. But no danger is believed to be imminent.

The reports in the radical papers that the President's visit to Baltimore had any political bearing or any connection with the difficulties in that city between Governor Swann and the Pol-e Commissioners are authoritatively denied. As stated in their despatches yesterday, the President did not see Governor Swann on his visit.

MARY BLAIN AND HAZEL DELL: Or, My Morning Drive. Away at morning's early dawn, In summer's heat or winter's storm, The three in trim go together, Heigh ho! who cares for cold or warm. Like clouds that flit before the storm, Their little feet go patter on, Praising to the rattling rattle Before the journey's end is won. Their flowing tails are briskly whisked, With flowing manes and curved necks, Their little feet go patter on, And nostrils wide defy the check. The reins are trembling in his fingers, As each one tries the lead to gain; Now every nerve and sense is waxed To keep them balanced on the reins. Away they go, their speed increasing, As level on the road they settle. The breath is rushing from their nostrils, Each one showing now its mouth. Forget not that each sense of mine Is thrilled to see them in their stride, And every mile that we have gone Has fixed another day to live. How many a drone is sleeping yet Within his warm and rich about, And cannot know the pleasure found At early dawn upon the road. Thus, at morning's early dawn, Behind those nags so swift and strong, I drink the sweet and refreshing air, And never let the drive too long. Hail to my nags, so swift and strong, The drive is good for them and me! Oh! I can teach you how to live, But you can't teach me how to die. J. D. W.

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